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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

10 June 1968

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Back to Classes in Belgrade

Many striking Belgrade university students promised to return to classes on 10 June after jubilantly greeting Tito's vow to solve their problems or resign. A rally of 10,000 students chanting, "we are Tito's, Tito is ours," gathered last night after his speech on TV to savor their victory. The speech was generally conciliatory, recognizing the legitimacy of the students' demands for educational reform, more state financial aid, and jobs after graduation. It is questionable, however, whether Tito will satisfy wider student demands for the firing of leading security officials, the curtailment of economic privilege among party members, and a more open press.

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Czechoslovak Deputy Premier to Moscow

Lubomir Strougal arrived in Moscow today for a continuation of talks on long term economic cooperation, which were begun on 4 May by Dubcek and Brezhnev.

The Czechoslovak announcement suggests that Strougal will be negotiating with Soviet Deputy Premier Baybakov on the Czechoslovak \$400 million loan request, which the Soviets have apparently been using as a means of extracting political concessions. A Czechoslovak specialist on intra-bloc relations has said that the Soviets will probably continue to study Prague's economic requests in order to influence the forthcoming party congress.

Strougal will not be without leverage, however. The West German Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) reportedly has offered to arrange approval by the Federal Government of a credit up to the amount of \$400 million, without the establishment of diplomatic relations. The SPD representative apparently urged, however, that in return Czechoslovakia should lower its military expenditures. Under such conditions, Prague is looking for part of the \$400 million elsewhere; the Italian party is said to be encouraging the government in Rome to join with Bonn's offer.

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GRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

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East European Reaction to the Kennedy Assassination

East European press commentary has portrayed the late Senator Kennedy as one of the few members of the US leadership with a positive, realistic approach to the problems of the world. Kennedy's position on Vietnam, racism, lawlessness and his compassion for the poor have been repeatedly emphasized.

Press treatment of Sirhan, however, is causing some defensive embarrassment. The Arab nationality of the alleged assassin directly conflicts with the "world Zionist conspiracy" painted by Polish and other East European propaganda machines. Nationality or religion of "murderers like Sirhan and Oswald" are absolutely secondary, according to a Czechoslovak editorial. Avoiding this aspect of the case, news coverage from most of Eastern Europe make strong efforts to suggest direct links between the assassination of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, while dwelling on the strains of violence in American society.

The US embassies in Prague and Belgrade report numerous telegrams and letters from individuals and groups plus a moderate but steady stream of visitors to sign the condolence book. Many of the Yugoslav visitors showed deep emotional reaction, according to embassy officers.

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Albania Gloats Over Student Unrest in Yugoslavia

Tirana has lost no time in reporting that "millions" of Yugoslav students are demonstrating against the Titoist educational system, for better living conditions, and against police repressions.

The Hoxha regime is always anxious to point out failings --real or not--in Yugoslavia, but this time they are taking special delight in reporting the appearance of Peking-style wall posters bearing slogans similar to their own propaganda--"enough with the red bourgeoisie" and "four million Yugoslavs are suffering from lack of their daily bread."

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Prospects for Improved US-East German Relations

The US Mission in Berlin views the release of the two American citizens held by the East Germans as cause for removing the restrictive visa policy invoked earlier as a means of pressuring Pankow. Furthermore, the Mission thinks that contacts between the US and the GDR could be increased in order to establish "more normal commercial relations."

The Mission has suggested private contacts between US and East German scholars, scientists and artists; exchanges of scientific and technical publications; contacts between USIS personnel and East German journalists; and a more liberal commercial policy. Such steps, the Mission hopes, would contribute to improved East-West relations.

The Mission, however, may be placing too much emphasis on the importance of visa restrictions in the release of the prisoners. While the East Germans certainly appeared eager to get certain commercial visas their current propaganda line does not reveal a desire to become chummy with the US.

Overtures from Washington toward the GDR probably would stand a less-than-even chance of being accepted. Moreover, if accepted the East Germans would almost certainly try to exploit them far beyond their worth to us.

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Czechoslovak Bishop Returns to his See

Roman Catholic Bishop Josef Hlouch returned to his South Bohemian diocese on 9 June after an absence of nearly twenty years.

The 66 year-old bishop was reinstated in Ceske Budejovice in a colorful ceremony attended by thousands of people, including government officials. Bishop Hlouch was removed from his post in 1949, later was arrested, and then released from jail. He has been prevented up to now from carrying on his pastoral work, however.

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The regime will watch carefully to see that this staunch anti-Communist prelate does not engage in political activity.

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